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September 29, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

HOLY FAMILY SERVICES ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in April 2016. The FFA has two offices, one located in the First Supervisorial District and one located in Orange County and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to promote quality family opportunities for children without regard to race, religion, sex, or ethnic origin, through education, counseling, and support activities."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in 8 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment. The OHCMD noted an opportunity for improved performance in the focus area of Teamwork.

In May 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Teamwork. The FFA provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendations noted in this report.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR
KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Julie Brown, Executive Director, Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care Foster Family Agency
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**HOLY FAMILY SERVICES ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in April 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with one Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Worker (CSW), one FFA Social Worker and one certified foster parent. The focus child selected for the review could not be interviewed due to his very young age. The QAR Reviewer, as part of the review observed the certified foster parent's interaction with the focus child. The certified foster parent appeared to be attuned to the needs of the focus child.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised one DCFS placed child in one certified foster home. The focus child has had one placement through the FFA. The length of placement has been four months and the one DCFS placed child is four months in age (the focus child has been placed since birth). The focus child was not included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

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QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	6 - Optimal Status	The focus children have optimal permanency. The focus children have achieved legal permanency and/or live in a family setting which the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and all team members have evidence will endure lifelong.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	6 - Optimal Stability	The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters and peers. There is no history of instability over the past 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	6 - Optimal Engagement Efforts	To an optimal degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that excellent efforts are being used.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	4 - Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork	The team contains some of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

The OHCMD did not conduct a QAR of the FFA in 2014-2015 as the FFA had no DCFS placed children during the relevant period.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015-2016 Scores	6	6	6	N/A

In the areas of Safety, Permanency, and Placement Stability, the FFA provides optimal quality of services and stability to the focus child. The FFA Social Worker stated that weekly visits are made to the certified foster home and a visual assessment of the placed child is conducted since the focus child is preverbal. The FFA Social Worker stated that they look for any red flags and address them with the certified foster parents right away. Time is spent separately with the placed children away from the certified foster parents during the visits. Continuing education is provided to the certified foster parents throughout the year. The certified foster parents reported there has been training on how to keep the home environment safe, free of safety hazards, and the FFA's policies and procedures. She further stated someone from the FFA is always available to her. There have been no safety related incidents involving the FFA in the last 30 days. The DCFS CSW stated that the FFA and certified foster parents have demonstrated that they are able to protect the focus child. The certified foster parents reported that the FFA talks and shares information with her regarding the focus child and the adoption process. The FFA Social Worker stated that the FFA remains in constant communication with the DCFS CSW regarding the focus child's permanency goal. The FFA Social Worker also stated that this is important to ensure that everyone is on the same page. The focus child's permanent plan is adoption with his

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certified foster parents. The certified foster parents stated that the FFA is very good with answering questions, keeping them abreast of court proceedings, and preparing them for what the next steps will be to finalize the adoption process. The DCFS CSW stated that the FFA is very responsible. The focus child has had no disruptions with his placement. The focus child has an enduring relationship with his certified foster parents, as they are dedicated to providing a permanent home for the focus child. The FFA Social Worker stated that to ensure the placement remains stable, the FFA provides as much information as they can to the certified foster parents at the beginning of the placement. An emphasis is placed on communication between the placed child and certified foster parents to facilitate placement stability.

The area of Visitation is not applicable, as the focus child does not have any visits with family members/NREFMs. The FFA Social Worker stated that the FFA assists the certified foster parents in scheduling and monitoring visits and the FFA Social Workers transport the placed children to their visits.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	4	5

The FFA scored at the optimal level in the area of Engagement. The FFA Social Worker reported that information regarding the focus child's developmental progress is shared and communicated with the certified foster parents and the DCFS CSW and any people important to the placed children. This is done to ensure everyone has the same information and is moving towards the same goal. The certified foster parent reports that she is in frequent communication with the FFA. The certified foster parent also stated that she has full access to the FFA Social Worker and the FFA Social Worker shares information regarding the child's legal status. The DCFS CSW reported that there is constant communication with the FFA and that the FFA asks for updates on the focus child's development, well-being, and case plan.

In the areas of Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA reported that there are a good array of services available to the focus child, such as developmental assessments and early childhood intervention. The FFA develops Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with the certified foster parent and the DCFS CSW, which match with the services that are being provided to the focus child. The needs and strengths of the focus child are assessed and case plans are adapted to ensure the focus child is meeting his developmental milestones. The DCFS CSW reported that the FFA Social Worker and the

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certified foster parent keep her up-to-date regarding the focus child's milestones and well-being during her visits and via e-mails and telephone calls.

In the area of Teamwork, the OHCMD noted an opportunity for improvement in this area. The FFA Social Worker, certified foster parent, and DCFS CSW reported that formal team meetings were not being held. The OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA staff to discuss methods in which the FFA could improve in this area.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

The OHCMD did not provide the FFA with technical support related to CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review, as the FFA was in full compliance with the four applicable areas.

In May 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support addressing methods on improving in the area of Teamwork. The FFA submitted the attached approved QIP. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the FFA in implementing their QIP.



June 24, 2016

Quality Improvement Plan for Holy Family Services (2016)

This is the response to the Quality Assurance Review of Holy Family Services completed on May 31, 2016 by Los Angeles County, Department of Children and Family Services Reviewer, Greta Walters.

The finding listed as follows:

For the Focus area of "Teamwork" the agency received a rating of "4"

Response:

Holy Family Services is doing the following to improve:

Effective immediately, the Executive Director will be responsible to make sure that HFS social work staff extend an invitation to all current County Social Workers to attend a face-to-face collaborative meeting with key parties at the agency's offices or the foster home approximately every (4) four months, such as the focus child(ren), the foster parents, agency staff, birth family and/or therapists, if any, in addition to extending an invitation to any weekly clinical meeting that they are available to attend. The purpose of the working team meetings will be to meet, discuss, and make plans together in the best interest of the focus child(ren) and to include, expound upon, and/or convey information obtained during weekly clinical meetings. The meetings will be documented as to content and team member attendance.

Please let me know if there are any questions or concerns.

Thank you.


Julie Brown

Executive Director